

Hughes Allen.
611 Huntington St.
Newark, N.J.
(pages 2-4 only) 2466

"Bound in Brown"
Poems

POETRY

HUGHES ALLISON
611 HUNTERDON ST.,
NEWARK, N.J.
(Bigelow 2-4466J)

BOUND IN BROWN
(Something Of The Negro In Verse)

by
HUGHES ALLISON

Hughes Allison.

ILLUSTRATED

by
LAURA WINTER



My soul seems as leaves in a book
Beneath a cover bound in brown.

ILLUSTRATIONS

TITLE OF POEM ILLUSTRATED.....	PAGE
Frontispiece.....	1
The Birth Of Spirituals.....	2
Jungle Dancer.....	12
Race Mixture.....	23
Heavy Load.....	38

INDEX

TITLE	PAGE
Bound In Brown.....	1
The Birth Of Spirituals.....	2
Beauty.....	3
Crimson Wine And Red Flowers.....	4
These Warning Words.....	5
The Post.....	6
Under These Trees.....	7
City Streets In Summer Nights.....	8
My Flight.....	9
The Great Day.....	10, 11
Jungle Dancer.....	12
A Colored Prayer To A White God.....	13
Late Petition.....	14
To A Country Girl.....	15
To Valeria.....	16
Two Versions Of Life.....	17
Flirt.....	18
Prize Fighter.....	19
Judas.....	20
To A Certain Black Girl.....	21
To Negro Leaders.....	22
Race Mixture.....	23
Morning.....	24
Noon.....	25
Dusk.....	26
Night.....	27
The Organ.....	28
To A Dead Girl.....	29
Moods.....	30
To Langston Hughes.....	31
I Am Happy.....	32
Lies Of Conquest.....	33
Derivation Of Woman.....	34
Virgin.....	35
Yeah Man!!.....	36
Po' Nigger!.....	37
Heavy Load.....	38
THREE LONG POEMS	
	39
Full Portrait In Color.....	40
I--PROLOGUE	
Black Mother--White Father.....	41
II--ACT ONE	
Child To Man.....	42
III--INTERLUDE	
The Inevitable Woman.....	43

INDEX (continued)

TITLE	PAGE
IV--ACT TWO	
Desire Plants Ambition.....	47
V--ACT THREE	
Color's Talents Are Futile.....	49
VI--EPILOGUE	
Ambition Never Dies.....	51
The Sensual Ballad To A Brown Girl's Flesh.....	52
The Coming Of Tatu.....	59

BOUND IN BROWN

* *

My soul seems as leaves in a book
With my skin, their cover and bound
In color warm which, as you look,
Calls forth a shade in autumn found.

Yet, these leaves are unknown pages
Which might, if read, strange worlds reveal
Where dark rumbling water rages
'Round green fields whence tunes gayly peal.

When time this volume must explore
Some new wonders may yet be shown,
Foreign, perhaps, to custom's shore
Beneath a cover bound in brown.



THE BIRTH OF SPIRITUALS

* * *

A blood biting whip's hungry lash
Dashes out to mingle with tears
While curses through the night air flash
Mixing with endless jeers.

A lone brooding black man sitting
On the grass of a river's bank,
Eyes on deep water whispering
Of Jehovah to thank.

He knows no great sweet words to say
Just soul blistering moans to hum,
He has no instrument to play
Only heartstrings to strum.

BEAUTY

**

Beauty may be a red, red rose,
A deep blue azure sky,
Or a winter's lake still furze
Or trees in splendor high.

Beauty may be a blushing maid
With dimples laughing deep,
Or cheeks where smiles are gayly laid
'Neath eyes that coyly leap.

Beauty may be a couple old
Watching a last sunset,
Or love more precious than bright gold
With souls that march in step.

CRIMSON WINES AND RED FLOWERS
(To Laura)

* * *

Youth to youth pressed in passion
Drinking Cupid's first cup,
Stealing moments years must ransom
Less life's blood devils sup.

Flowers dominate the cool night
With warm prolific scent
Bringing incarnate this bold sight
Like crimson wines ferment.

Pressed grape and rose stimulate love
In this star crown'd darkness
As morphine sends dreamers to rove
Through rash worlds of madness.

Long lost is he who wets his lips
With bubbling crimson wines,
And red petals in his hand grips
From blooms off clinging vines.

THESE WARNING WORDS
(To Nancy Cunard)

* * *

White Girl, gaze not with longing eyes
On him whose skin is brown;
Nor listen yet to passion's sighs
For men will surely frown.

Brown Boy, remember cords have bound
Your soul to custom's code;
And lovely notes strange bugles sound
Black danger might forebode.

THE POET
(To Countess Cullen)

* * *

No matter where go the wandering throng
There always goes the ever dreaming bard
To charm with his honeyed words the crowd
That often with lilting jeers doth prolong
The dull heartache till it be a death song.
Yet, though his lot seem increasingly hard,
A chance is there, when deep beneath the sod
His weary bones do rot, will come along
One to read thoughts carefully recorded.
May they always be gentle and as fresh
As the morn dew his poems often lauded;
And as long as there be bone, breath, and flesh,
God grant there be minstrels with brains loaded
With high ideas keen as the light'nings flash.

UNDER THESE TREES
(To Johnnie)

* * *

Here, under these beguiling trees,
As we lie on this morn dew grass,
Let me look deep in your soft eyes
And break my heart gnawing love fast.

Let my beseeching hungry lips
Drink from yours mellow sweet nectar
In joyous and delicious sips
This fragrance of fresh mown clover.

Let my warm passionate hands press,
Until you scream with restless pain
Your lovely dancing rounded breasts;
Open them so your heart I claim.

Mold yourself lusciously to me
As upon a tree grafts a branch
And away in close molt rhapsody
While our unburdened souls do prance.

CITY STREETS IN SUMMER NIGHTS

* * *

THE heartbreaking clatter is o'er
 Work is done and light play begun
 Brightening dim shades that lower
 Beneath the earth the aging sun.

Girls sit on baking narrow steps
 To watch, with boyfriends, rumble seats
 Where sit the few sweet luck accepts
 To ride where pleasure subtly leaps.

The raging brats still at hot play
 Fill the dusk with haranguing sounds
 While prostitutes wantonly stray
 On pavements no policeman pounds

The lamp post lights add to heat--
 The shadowy trees rise like ghosts--
 The sky is full of stars that leap--
 The moon listens to lovers' boasts.

MY FLIGHT

* * *

My hope, built in dreams,
Wanders like a lonely star
Where moonlight gleams
In the sky off so far.

My love, clothed in mist,
Dances like frosty sea-spray
Where sun meets dust
In window-lights to play.

My blood, like strong wines,
Leaps as a red searing flame
Where veins like vines
Wind 'bout my weary brain.

My heart, filled with you,
Bursting with such warm desire
Lends me no clue
To find answering fire.

THE GREAT DAY
(For my Mother and Father)

* * *

How great the day when on the earth
Each man shall find Life's divine worth
Is peace and rest;
When friendship means more than color;
When men shall prove merit rather
Than wealth is best.

II

How gentle would steal morning suns
Af't then to kiss water that runs
Down sloping hills
To be dashed in the sleeping eyes
Of dreamers whose beguiling sighs
The still air fills.

III

When we awake to meet the task
Which the rich earth upon us cast
Let us first stand
In solemn and sagacious thought
Regarding wonders God hath wrought
With mighty hand.

IV

Better then are we work to meet,
Our loves, friends, and foes all to greet
With gentle smile;
Better are we to realize
That man is not the angel's prize
But earth's best style.

(continued over)

V

Might the rich man regard the poor
 As one to enter his great door
 With honest tread;
 And break at the common table
 As equal, and not as rabble,
 The harvest bread.

VI

Might good women meet the fallen
 Not with eyebrow lifted sudden,
 And virtue show;
 But with understanding true speech
 Beg their hearts to hear and beseech
 New hope to grow.

VII

Might then come the one constant love
 To embrace the soul as a glove
 With glowing warmth;
 And murmur intriguing music
 So filled with notes exotic
 Dreams bask in wealth.

VIII

Would heaven then sing a peace psalm
 Greater than any earth songs that calm
 This aching heart;
 Would Life be in gay harmony
 And not one sordid enemy
 Real friendship part.



JUNGLE DANCER

* * *

Wild, black creature
 Glad only in moonlight,
 ..waving with rapture
 In the throbbing night.

Stark, bare savage
 Winding, twisting, shaking
 No soul to salvage
 Only flesh....dancing.

On through the dark
 Tom-Toms weirdly beating
 Music from a harp
 A black girl prancing.

Jet quiv'ring flesh
 Between tall jungle trees
 Coy moonbeams flash
 In brown leaping eyes.

A COLORED PRAYER TO A WHITE GOD

* * *

Oh God!--from thy mighty store of kindness
 Grant me one thing--not of wealth nor power;
 Just a mite of peace from blind hatred so sour
 It pulls from my bowels rank bitterness.
 And give me a moment of joyfulness,
 A kind word, bright music, a soft shower
 That I may laugh, sing, dance, grow a flower
 Of great beauty....Grant me this happiness
 And I will grow strong in my faith in man
 For he will curse me no more; but love me.
 And both of us will build, for then we can,
 A glorious mountain temple for thee
 Living in it till the winds that soft fan
 Our faces have sunk into the deep blue sea.

LATE PETITION

* * *

Let us be young again
And glide as children
Over hill and through lane
As we were then--
Then life was new,
And our hot breath
Warmed the dew.

TO A COUNTRY GIRL

* * *

You, quaint miss
 Far from city sounds
 won'ring in bliss
 Through dales, on mounds--

--Could your smile
 But generate lights
 Each stony mile
 In urban nights--

--Could your laugh
 But stimulate mirth
 Only just half
 The days in life--

--Could your soul
 But be mine to claim
 I'd reach my goal
 And glide to fame.

TO VALERIA

* * *

Where once I pillow'd warm my face
Now beats your heart in pain;
But less you mistake deuce for ace
Let me the game explain,
Career for me was far off sky
And you were like the earth,
So, if I rise, I must fly high
And leave your loving hearth.

TWO VERSIONS OF LIFE

* * *

THE PALE version of life
 Is unified, dominating,
 Sharp as a whitted knife
 And snobbishly satisfying.

THE DARK sombre version
 Is as different as its color--
 Warm....dipped in passion
 In shades black to pasty pallor.

FLIRT

(To Marguerite B.)

With petite careless smirking smiles
That travel like torn paper bits
Through wind that rages, sighs, and whirls
Her beauty a heart's desire rips.

PRIME FIGURE
(To Kid Chocolate)

black man's soul is like water
 'neath its surface waits a wild storm;
 but his heart's heart does not falter
 when oppressor's blows strike with harm.

JUDAS

This slimy thing they have called my friend,
That'd squeeze my heart to death,
Could never find material to mend
Its crookedness on earth.

TO A CERTAIN BLACK GIRL

* * *
Your skin is black, your hair kinky,
And although your talents run high
Because you've so little beauty
In heav'n only....you'll reach the sky.

TO NEGRO LEADERS

* * *

You pioneers must needs keep faith
With us who struggle hard to rise,
And in this dark problem of race
Remember there's no place for lies.



RACE MIXTURE

* * *

Nordic,

Mulatto,

Negro,

Streak'd together in blood,
Although doubtful as to honor,
And not understood
Some point fingers of dishonor.

MORNING

The cock's deep throated cry--
The first ray of light--
A sleeper's angry sigh
And 'tis the end of night.

Slowly comes a tripping
The bashful maid--Dawn
To startle by blushing
And story of fair morn.

NOON

A whistle's single tune
Notes the sun's heavenly pitch
has reached its apex;
And by the clock--it's noon.

DUSK

* * *

A great fallall of glowing rust
 Announces in the sky's blue west
 The sombre, gentle peaceful dusk
 Where sparkling romance wanders best.

No better moment for music
 Than sunset's crimson carol call
 When night's curtain so exotic
 Begins its slow intriguing fall.

Even gentler than soft twilight,
 And more informing than the dawn;
 Relating tales of bright daylight,
 Casting prophecy of new morn.

NIGHT

Shadows gathering in a mass
 Hide the glow of a crimson sun
 The rising moon coming at last
 And ending romping childhood's fun.

Then out creeps thief and murderer,
 While songs greet jade women and wine
 And youth's spirit grows still wilder
 With the fleeting hours marking time.

Meant for stillness and restful sleep
 For those who've been in day's long fight
 Climbing 'life's hill so high and steep,
 It comes a symbol of peace....night.

THE ORGAN

No smiling sun can ever warm
 An aching breaking heart forelorn
 As music of a holy psalm
 Played on an organ at bright morn.

No better sound hath man yet heard
 Than air rushing through many reeds
 To charm and thrill this ceaseless herd
 Serching for Life's sustaining needs.

At morn, at noon, at eventide,
 No better way to spend the time
 Than list'ning to soft tunes that glide
 Long whis'pring pipes....some deep, some fine.

TO A DEAD GIRL
(Wilhelmina)

" " "
I have no strength
To bear this sight....
You stretched full length
In death....this night.

I have no will
To stem my tears....
You lying so still
My heart....pain sears.

I have no shame
Hearing my voice
Crying out....so lame
"Lost hope....God's choice."

MOODS

Melancholy, peaceful....
 Gay--with music'....
 Temperamental and artistic....
 The earth and heaven
 Lend
 Their charms
 To diversify our souls....
 Soft, sweet hours
 We spend while the sun
 Makes the flowers
 And little animals
 Sweeter to see, smell, and hear;
 Our senses influenced
 By
 All that is clean
 And healthful....
 But still the debris
 Of our minds interferes....
 Sad, hopeless--
 Listless....with death....
 We give ourselves,
 Like wanton women,
 To moods....that change.

TO
LANGSTON HUGHES

* * *
On bended knees
Let me lift
My humble eyes
To you....God's gift.

In mumbling word
Let me praise
You...noble bard--
Your every phrase.

I AM HAPPY

I laugh

I dance

I sing

I have no worries,
 No markets to lose,
 My life is simple:--

Glad gay tunes
 And funny words
 Fill my heart
 And make my feet
 To be so quick.

LIES OF CONQUEST

* * *

Lips....

That trip

With subtle charm....

A bud doth nip;

But not to harm.

DERIVATION OF WOMAN

* * *
 A last ray of sunset
 Combined
 With dawn's first blush,
 And spring's firm step
 On a rose, crushed
 Close
 To the earth's breast,
 To name her....Woman.

VIRGIN

* * *

The bliss of innocence,
Like an angel's charm
Invelops her in incense....
Fragrant....like a new morn....
While music, chants
A celestial psalm.

Yeah man!!

* * *

Yeah man! Aw'm in de band
And plays wid all mah might
Music like burning sand
Each and every night.

Yeah man! Heay dat rhythm
Shout'n syncopation
Zizling cullud Harlem
Jazz on exhibition.

Yeah man! See dem gals dance
Wid music in dey souls
Mah! How dem boys kin prance
When dat saxophone rolls.

PO' NIGGER!

* * *

White man got tuh git turble sad
 Tuh sing de weary blues,
 But de niggers when gay and glad
 Kin sing loud 'bout bad news.

And when niggers shouts "news is cool
 Lawd, de chariot's coming!"
 White man done gone fum whar he stood
 In cars bright and shining.

When dat chariot gone git o'here?
 Nigger done sung and sung!
 White man he des set in his chair
 And he done even hum!

Niggers keep telling each other;
 "Things gone git heap bettuh
 And soon white man calls yuh brother";
 But hit's get'en wussuh.

When dees niggers gone do something
 'Bout dees knocks, cuffs and kicks?
 Day des set and de same bee sting!
 Kant det git no new tricks?



HEAVY LOAD

* * *

Lawd!--dis big load
Gonna break mah back
Lawd!--up dis long road,
Tot'en a levee sack.

Lawd!--dees hard times
Gonna bring hunger,
Lawd!--Up dees steep climbe
Aint making me younger.

Lawd!--lomme rest
Wid plenty and peace
Lawd!--in a soft nest
A pillow fo' mah face.

THREE LONG POEMS

FULL
PORTRAIT IN COLOR
(For Harry)

- I--PROLOGUE
Black Mother--White Father.
- II--ACT ONE
Child To Man.
- III--INTERLUDE
The Inevitable Woman.
- IV--ACT TWO
Desire Plants Ambition.
- V--ACT THREE
Color's Talents Are Futile.
- VI--EPITAPH
Ambition Never Dies.

I

PROLOGUE

Black Mother--White Father.

* * *

Fate was priest at their empiric wedding
 And made them one, uniting Dusk with Dawn;
 Bewitched the sun to set when t'was rising,
 So that morn returned to night with a yawn;
 Made the moon a marriage bed; and the tide
 Was their music, beating upon the shore
 With discordant time while the tune was wide
 Of harmony. Dusk's womb Dawn did explore
 And soon filled it heavy with a strange child
 That was neither Dawn nor Dusk, but twilight;
 Mysterious as a ghost and as wild--
 With much moving to and fro--as starlight.
 Mother and child the father did forsake
 And left them both their own hard road to make.

II

ACT ONE

Child To Man.

* * *

Upon the earth was thrown this lad
 From out the darkest womb
 Upon a world gone spanking mad
 Lived him till came his tomb.

He, a child did play in the sands
 In childish revelry
 And let it trickle through his hands
 As if t'were jewelry.

And like the sands all seemed simple
 There seemed never a care;
 Infant eyes saw Life a temple
 For one and all to share.

T'was a temple built for a god,
 A mighty god indeed,
 Ruling from high heaven to deep sod
 With evil hate its creed.

Half the world worships the idol
 Prostrate before him falls--
 His tenet held close to its soul--
 And on its belly crawls.

The cringing other half suffers
 Not so much from sharp pain
 As from cowardice it confers
 On its own soul in shame.

And the lad between halves was torn
 Till his heart knew no peace
 And upon his tired brain was born
 A stolid dark caprice.

Now mature, on the sands he bumped
 His crazed bewildered head
 While inside his heart crashed and thumped
 And his soul pain was fed.

A prayer he offered but to whom
 He knew not....t'was said though
 To Him who makes gay flowers bloom
 And causes winds to blow.

"My God! Our God!" cried he to sky,
 "My petition please hear!
 Though I mumble but just a sigh
 My meaning is quite clear"

"Upon my knees do I ask it:
 Oh God! do grant it me,
 And from thy great throne where thou sit
 Bless thou my humble plea."

"Grant me a soul my very own
 That I might with music
 Fill it pregnant in beauty sown
 Of cadence intrinsic."

"Grant me a brain my very own
 That I might think ideas
 From lands the four great winds have blown
 Where there be no cheap fears".

"Grant me a heart my very own
 That I might learn to love
 Love as caressing as sea foam
 That o'er blue waves doth rove".

III

THE INTERLUDE

The Inevitable Woman.

* * *

Saw

Him a maid--

With dark flowing hair

And eyes of mystic mist

That peeped from golden skin;

Mold in form alluring--

Who hummed tunes through lips

Of bright hue.

She

Upon him

Cast her lovely eyes

And smiled with her red mouth

Then dressed her form with care

(With much care 'bout her limbs);

Sprinkled sweet perfume

In midst hair.

Each movement she made placed a taught heart string
And strange words from deep out of him did spring.

"Let me speak with you", said he,

"For if I keep these words long

Certainly sick will I be--

You would do me not that wrong!"

And to his nostrils floated through the air
The sweet perfume from off dark flowing hair.

Coy
 She acted,
 And appeared startled;
 But did not flee from him,
 Neither did she near him,
 Nor smile yet once again;
 But still mystic light
 Flashed her eyes.

He drew close to her even to touch her
 Finding her as warm as sun kissed laughter.

"The moon, stars, and sun", his voice,
 Ripe with passion, did proclaim
 "Were once, I thought, of my choice;
 But just their light did I tame".

"Now, you are far more brilliant
 Than they might ever become,
 But more than things radiant
 From you I, vain, do welcome".

She let him draw her close against his chest
 And with care timed her heart's beat in her breast.

Beside a gentle flowing stream
 He made a soft seductive bed;
 For covering used a moonbeam
 Spread o'er rose petals white and red:
 Naked, face up, with puckered lips
 And arms flung out on either side
 Watched by limbs tapering from hips
 Smooths as velvet, she lay and sighed.

The trees waved to the distant stars
 Which waved back their gay, light fingers;
 The clouds ceased gathering for wars
 On drought which o'er far field lingers;
 And 'neath a moonbeam's covering
 Lay him and her who there did choose,
 While all nature was a smiling,
 Their sighing, blissfulness to lose.

I /

ACT TWO

Desire Plants Ambition.

* * *

Food, clothing, and a woman's love
Beneath dry warm shelter
Seems all one could ask from above
But joy, time doth pilfer.

And hate did soon bid sullen time
Tap upon Desire's door
And tell him wherefore he might shine
His light on fools once more.

Desire blazed forth with much vigor
And spoke glib blandish speech
Like Judas, that fatal traitor,
Who Christ's rule did impeach.

"See," cried Desire with ruthless skill,
"These buildings cloud-like high,
Here, this factory; there, that mill;
Those ships that fly the sky."

"Cast your eyes upon that river,
Its broad spand, its deep banks;
Then see the bridges that sever
Nature's once gleaming ranks."

"Journey with me the blue ocean
Where giant waves careen
And see there great ships in motion
Without dip, cant, or lean."

"Tour with me the earth's guileless pits
Where shine unhamper'd rails
Along which a speeding train slips:
Time, mile....the subway flails."

"And upon the earth's broad surface
 Oil fed steel giants run;
 Charging forward, keeping straight pace
 With the globe trotting sun".

"This harvest season you behold:
 Fields, full with yellow grain;
 Vast orchards' tree limbs heavy hold
 Sweet fruit of pure bred strain."

"Look you at yond thick wooded land:
 Great forrests yet uncut,
 Where ancient, silent trees do stand
 Majestically they strut!"

"Tell me, mixture of Dusk and Dawn
 What subtle thing is this
 That, since to manhood you've grown,
 Derides your childish bliss?"

"Cannot your arms, your fretful hands
 Be set to useful toil?
 Cannot they loose custom's wrist bands
 So you may till the soil?"

"Cannot you too reap the harvest,
 Build those lofty towers,
 In commerce for profit invest,
 And grow rich with the hours?"

"Must you always be a lacky,
 Told to go to and fro,
 Bending your back to loads mighty,
 Bucking all winds that blow?"

V

ACT THREE

Color's Talents Are Futile.

* * *

Thus the seeds of Desire were placed
Heart deep in human soil,
And upward to the light they raced
With blooms hatred did spoil.

Upon a hilltop he mounted
And stretched forth his dark hand;
Millions of his kind he counted
Whence on high he did stand.

Within him sinuously brewed
A bombastic typhoon
Which his tongue whimsically wooed
With a gall bitter tune.

At last the words stripped themselves wide
Of his distended breast,
Crashing listener's ears like a tide
By a thousand storms preest....

"Hear me!--oppressed and oppressors!
The one must fast oppose,
The other must be less author's
Tradition's ornate pose!"

"Hate me and mine not for this flesh
That presents us sombre
Wherewith nature souls did immesh,
And to hell....hearts tether!"

"Surely here stands the man for test!
What matter the binding?
It's the page that tells stories best
From books of high standing!"

"Why do you banish my talents
Which may....progress hasten
From years to mere lesson moments,
And Life....to ease fasten?"

Then the great god hate was bestirred
Within the listeners' breasts;
Satanic was forthwith conferred
Doctrines to sky high crests....

"No matter the talents", they cried,
"Descendants of the Dusk
Must ever be to darkness tied....
Dawn's crown we cannot risk!"

"Your lot be cast to lowly life
Where trod bolt pigs in muck;
Your burdens must ever be rife
Till death sound forth its cluck!"

Of all the souls who'd heard him speak
His son was most impressed
And vowed his father's way he'd seek
Till custom be immersed.

Long years imbued wanton labor
Upon the father's back
Till his ship reached its last harbor
Though success did it lack.

"This fight against ranc tradition,
Lost to the naked eye,
Through me....will find habitation!"
Was the son's battle cry.

VI

EPITAPH

Ambition Never Dies.

* * *

Here, In this dank cold earth, in peace I sleep
While strife, hate, love parade above my bones
And onward stalks the wolf still biting deep--
This canibal, tradition, that condones
Ill treatment of fate's exterior scene.
But my children shall set the subtle trap
While the werewolfe his surly pride loth preen;
And when at last this vampire--who would tap
The artery of liberty--is dead,
Lavishing on earth perfect harmony,
Then will this still grave be a sweeter bed.
Oh! to know that the seasons faithfully
Join as one--Indian Summer--that Life
Might be without hate's bitter color strife!

THE SENSUAL BALLAD TO A BROWN GIRL'S FLESH
(For Laura W.)

THE
SONG OF A BROWN GIRL

* * *

Here sings the song of a Brown Girl
A maid in a southern kitchen
Whose flesh made her master's head whirl
Till God him forsaken.

Her smooth skin was brown....golden brown
Like sweet sugar when unrefined,
And her musical voice....its sound
His reason undermined.

To her dark room, one silent night,
He did slowly creep....guiltily,
With not one thought for wife or right
To brown flesh....so lovely.

Over her quivering red mouth
He clapped his throbbing white hand
There that night in the torrid south
While he whisper'd his plan.

He promised costly, priceless things
Riches that might be hers....just hers;
Trinkets, and clothes, and green glass rings
All vanity prefers.

And for these filthy lustful gifts
From brown flesh must forever part
The virtue that listlessly lifts
The cover from her heart.

Pleading brought him nought, but strong threats
Broke the will within dusky flesh....
For weakness brutal strength begets;
Power angels doth crush.

So the soul of that gentle maid
 Was in ranc muck like weed seed sown
 And on a shameful altar laid
 Sacrificed to lust's own.

Virility spent, and bargain paid
 With bitter gems of sour disgrace
 As bargains are when painful made
 Hot tears sped down her face.

To him was she fuel for lust,
 A concubine to bend with pride
 flesh....the color of autumn rust;
 Her fate....his to decide.

To her was he gentleman....born
 With pedigree for ages gone back
 To kings and queens with blue blood sworn
 With all things others lack.

But great birth stops not burning hate,
 And forced love is but mocking shame,
 The three together nev can mate....
 Hate with shame leaves love lame.

Yet hate....his senses nev could still
 For desire sprung from restless brutes
 Quells the fire that warms winter's chill
 From Life's most precious roots.

For she was soft brown flesh....golden flesh
 Warm like the sun....desirable....
 Tender, sweet, and youthfully fresh
 Like spring is lovable.

Night after night the white man came
 With more gifts of jewelry fine
 Reward for a soul shame did claim
 "Aked from core to rine.

Even hell cried out at this rape
 And heaven caught its breath in pain
 The devil hid behind his cape
 And God's tears fell like rain.

The Brown Girl one night....swiftly fled
 Far to the north in Harlem Town
 Trembling still with dark fitful dread
 Like a bird many miles flown.

The hard pavement of Old New York
 Searching for work....she gayly tread
 With heart as cheerful as a lark
 Still gaiety brings not bread.

New York refused her honest work
 And her heart grew sad and lonesome
 In the best town of all....New York
 With buildings so handsome.

This city too likes luscious flesh
 And so upon its streets at night
 She sold her beauty new and fresh
 Till came competing light.

Though motions of passion she made,
 Never had she felt emotion
 Such as love....her stout heart invade
 With its soft dew lotion.

And when first she saw soft dark eyes
 Of him whose youth was still quite new,
 Her tongue was glib with passion's lies
 Till he was hers she knew.

At begining he paid no heed
 To her low cooing sweet love call
 But flexible like a spring reed
 He was....and soon did fall.

For she was soft brown flesh....golden flesh
 Warm like the sun....desirable....
 Tender, sweet, and youthfully fresh
 Like spring is lovable.

His soul he gave, and hers she gave,
 Theirs was truly a perfect love;
 The kind lasting beyond the grave,
 Love born in heav'n above.

The gentle Brown Boy she adored
 And his affection soon she found
 Was constant, and in it she glowed
 As cats make purring sound.

Of her past Brown Girl told nothing
 And Brown Boy thought her pearl white pure
 So at gentle love did both fling
 Their souls and hearts demure.

They were bound in holy wed-lock
 And lived in a Harlem Town flat
 But fate soon did gleefully mock
 Cupid's face with a slap.

For in the south she'd spun a spell
 About him whose skin....pale was born
 And desire for her burned him still
 And stuck him as a thorn

Away he flew....away from all....
 His home, people, and fair blond wife
 To a Brown Girl to grovel and crawl
 Begging dark flesh and life.

But now his jewels cast she down
 And scorned his lustful passion
 And on him sour black fell her frown
 As on last year's fash'on.

The White Man's lust stuffed brain made plans
 For vengeance on brown beautiful flesh....
 His soul turned more beast's and less man's,
 Changing love's fire to ash.

Into a dark pawn shop he went
 Where his bleary eyes caught the sight
 Of a black pistol....which gave vent
 To his plan....that same night.

To Harlem Town he mad his way,
 Up the stairs to the Wed One's flat
 To their door where they lived so gay
 Beyond the "welcome Mat".

He stood first to hear the sounds within
 And heard her whispered sighs of love....
 Such things she'd never said to him....
 Sounds of a cooing dove.

It drove him wild with jealousy....
 A shot from his gun broke the lock
 And stopp'd their sate intimacy....
 Then madness love did mock.

The dread instrument quick of death
 He pointed straight at the Brown Girl's breast
 A loud sound....a deep sigh of breath
 And her life flew its nest.

And God did strike the White Man mad,
 Too mad for laws to take their course
 And Brown Boy was sad....Oh!....so sad;
 Grief ruled with mighty force.

Thet fastened behind asylum walls
 The White Man branded a killer,
 His fist at her Heart's halls....
 Oh!....why did he kill her!

For she was soft brown flesh....golden flesh
 Warm like the sun....desirable....
 Tender, sweet, and youthfully fresh
 Like spring is lovable.

The Brown Boy lived a living hell
 With his love above in heaven....
 He swore a curse, and swore it well....
 "God keep him forsaken".

THE KING OF SATU

(A prose poem writer from
an African legend)

THE COMING OF TATU

I

For never before has it once been told
 Of mighty Tatu who in time became
 The greatest Chief of Zundu; and who ruled
 With wisdom, strength, and stolid confidence
 None other than ponderous Africa.
 Before Tatu came Bubu was Head Chief,
 But Bubu passed as all worldly men pass--
 Whether white or black or other colors
 That men's skin's may have--ir leath. Though great was
 Bubu and a sage....no children had he,
 Not ver one. T'was strange this childless thine;
 Wives had he--a score or more tis of't said,
 For in the Continent Dark to marry
 Numerous women....is lawful custom.

II

But Bubu's wives bore him no sons; even
No girl later. And punished they are by the
Tribe's Witchman. Then Bubu, the great Chief, said.
An inky hole the Witchman deep did dig
And in it placed the erring screaming wives.
Thus punished he them who furnished no Chief
For the mighty tribe of Ancient Zundu.
All Africa was troubled at this thing,
This outlandish fetid time, leaderless,
And brought sacrifice before the sun god--
Even human flesh--but to no avail.
In all the land they could find no Chieftain
Worthy enough or sedulous enough
To mount the mighty tribe of Zundu's throne.

III

But Chatu, the Witchman, whose great power
The black men in reverence solemnly
Bowed down to--just even at sight of him,
And quicker still...when he spoke--rev' tianairai.
A council called he of Headmen one and
All to listen to his sagacious words
While down about the Wisdom Fire they sat.
Round about them rose the dark thick jungle,
Mysterious, frightening and brim full
Of things wild and ferocious. A lion's
Roar, a tiger's scream, and the slithering
Rustling noise of a snake was heard to pierce
The torrid night as Chatu sent his voice,
Full with passion, to join the night's noises.

IV

Chatu spoke, it is most certainly true,
In a strange and different tongue than ours;
But thought to mind of a black man is thought
To every man even though spoken
In course of bewildering idiom.
"Oh wise men all! Hear my voice!" Said Chatu,
Standing before them like a black druid.
"And by its tone determine these, my words,
To be more than noise that disturbs the air.
I come, Oh strong ur! mighty seamen, this night
To speak of that which, I know, is eating
Deep--like a carkero's sore--in your hearts.
The erring sluts that lived as Bubu's wives
Have given no leader to rule as Chief!"

V

A murmur went round the bright Wisdom fire
And then behold! there was a loud silence....
Loud it seemed; even the jungle's noise ceased.
The animals gathered close by the fire
And stiffered their ears so to hear Chatu
Who continued to speak. "Now Oh Headmen!"
Sounded again his awing voice. "Tis time
We seek a Chieftain to take Bubu's place;
One who will lead us on into the sun--
To our rightful place here in Africa,
As rulers of all the Dark Land People!"
And then spake a minor Chieftain who asked:
"Where, Oh mighty one, will we find this king
Who must be more brilliant than the warm sun?"

VI

"Tis as I tell you now," answered Chatu.

"To me, in a dream last night, the sun god
did kindly reveal whereforth we might find,
If we search, him in whose glorious strength
is invested unusual power.

He will not be as other earthly men
For his parentage will be uncertain.

Tis even suggested by the sun god

That man will have had yet little to do
With his begetting. And he will be found

Not only in a strange place but among

Things which, when you see them, will seem drool--

Some of you may say tis sacrilegious--

But, I am sure, there'll be analogy."

VII

Chatu spoke on and on into the night
 Till t'was most time for the Moon to step down
 From the sky's high throne and bow to the Sun.
 Yet the great men of Zundu did not tire
 Or show weariness....for his words soothed them,
 Made them dream of a lost kingdom regained;
 And painted pictures of a retrieved power.
 When Chatu ceased the motion to and fro
 Of his sagacious tongue, the Zundu men
 Were wild with delight. So wild were they all
 To hear his news that a tribal drum boomed
 With soul stirring rhythm throughout ten days
 While they danced....Headmen, warriors and all
 Till they dropped to the ground for want of sleep.

VIII

But when they had rested a day and night
 Off into the jungle led by Chatu
 They went. Not the whole tribe did follow him;
 But there did go choice mighty warriors.
 Strange to say no mishap once befell them;
 And travel in the African jungle--
 Even by those whose birth and entire life
 Exploring its tangled wild inferno
 Has been filled full with experience--
 Is but one more flirtation with danger.
 All trails end--though never before has one
 Brought such a pert up phantasmic climax;
 Certainly never has tradition so
 Seen made suffer such a ludicrous hour.

IX

The scene was set beneath tall jungle trees
And amid clinging vines that weaved themselves
In and out, up and down, snake like, around
And about the trees which sprang from without
The middle of a spotless green clearing.
The pretty blushes of dawn were footlights;
The men of Zundu were the audience;
And the play, itself, was a circus.
For huge, colossal creatures to and fro
Did swing, holding to the vines, in the trees.
Hordes of them there were....hundreds of big apes;
Bigger by far than any of like species
That the men of Zundu had ever seen***.
Who did welcome them as long lost brothers.

X

Then from out the midst of the apes did come
A female who held in her arms a babe--
A human child that tugged fondly at her
As if she were its true rightful mother;
And she held the child tenderly, the while
Walking meanfully, slowly to Chatu
To whom, when she reached him, she gave the babe.
Her surrender of her precious bundle
Was accompanied by round flowing tears
For no female....animal or human....
Can give up, dry eye'd, an infant she loves.
Then swinging up upon the bowing limb
Of a great tall tree swift she fled away
Deep into the bosom of the jungle.

XI

And as if by magic all the great apes
Disappeared leaving the men of Zundu,
Chatu, the Witchman, and the strange odd babe;
Again the long trail home was with safety
Traveled. But this time the whole dark jungle
Boomed forth the message that the new Chieftain
Had been found. Chatu kept the child himself,
Teaching him much about magic and life;
Imbued deep the spirit of the ruler
In his heart; and built his black body up
Til he was bigger, stronger yet than man
Had ever been in all dark Africa.
He was even stronger than a great ape
And Chatu, the Witchman, called him Tatu.

XII

And strange, strange tales the old women do tell,
Stories that conflict with truth and falsehood;
Only one man knows which story is true
And he whom they call Chatu is silent.
One is: that Bubu had mate with an ape;
Some do say t'was Chatu who wed* the ape;
Still others claim his foretoken from him
Did come whom they call the holy sun god.
Yet--though he ruled with dexterous design,
Built ingenious means for war defense,
And was himself incautious in battle,
Was known to ruminare as a poet,
And sing like the wild bird at news of spring--
But one knows the truth of Tatu's weird birth.